Underneath Your Clothes

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/24112324.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Timestamp, Lingerie, Smut, Tooth-Rotting Fluff, Romance, Falling In Love, Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper, Will doesn't know yet, Hannibal and Will being flustered and shy around each other, Anniversary, Biting, Possessive Behavior, Dirty Talk
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Perfect Match
Stats:	Published: 2020-05-10 Completed: 2020-05-13 Words: 10,184 Chapters: 2/2

Underneath Your Clothes

by EarthsickWithoutYou

Summary

On the occasion of their one-month dating anniversary, it's no surprise that Hannibal lavishes Will in gifts. But Will definitely wasn't expecting to receive lingerie...or that it would end up being a major turn-on.

Takes place between Chapters 10-11 of my fic "Perfect Match." It's not necessary to have read the original fic, though.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

“Will,” Hannibal greeted with a subtly excited smile. He stepped back to let Will into his house.

Inside, it smelled of delectably savory food, and Hannibal had obviously been hard at work. He wore an apron around his waist and his sleeves were rolled up to his elbows. His face was flushed from the warmth of the stove, his silver-strewn hair lightly moistened. “I’m so glad you’re here.”

The words, so plainly sincere, made Will’s heart skip a beat.

“Me too,” he affirmed, cupping Hannibal’s face and leaning in for a brief kiss on the cheek. The gesture was fondly teasing; he knew what Hannibal liked. Yet his answer was uncharacteristically bold and emotionally naked: “I’ve been looking forward to it all day.”

Hannibal’s eyes darted away from Will’s happy face, as if suddenly overwhelmed. “As have I. Please, come in and make yourself at home.”

It was like this now everytime they were around each other, and Will didn’t quite know why. They were official, they were dating -- hell, they’d even talked about moving in together and still, all it took was a glance and the proximity, the feeling of each other’s body heat and scent, to make them each blush and seek eye contact with flirtatious anticipation skittering along the edge of riotous need.

Hannibal whisked Will’s coat easily off and placed it on the coat rack, then led the way to the kitchen. “I’ll get you a glass of cabernet.”

On their first date, Will had awkwardly enthused that he loved cabernet, inadvertently causing Hannibal to plan some of their meals for pairing with that particular wine. In reality, Will didn’t have that much of a preference; all of the wine in Hannibal’s meticulously curated collection tasted amazing. But there was something so adorable about Hannibal’s dedication to pleasing him that Will wasn’t going to correct him anytime soon, if ever.

There were thick steaks sizzling in the big cast-iron skillet on the stove. Hannibal moved them from the heat and stirred a pot of sauce on the back burner. “Your arrival was perfectly timed. The meat will never be more delicious than about five minutes from now.”

He put on a pair of oven mitts and removed a large casserole dish resplendent with crispy-browned potatoes, smelling of garlic and parmesan in a way that made Will’s empty stomach grumble. Swishing the wine around in his glass, carefully mirroring Hannibal’s method before taking a small sip, he felt self-conscious about being the cause of all this culinary ceremony.

“You don’t have to go to this kind of trouble for me every time I come over, Hannibal.”

“It’s no trouble at all; in fact, it’s a matter of distinct pleasure for me to do this for you. Now, the trick with steak au poivre is to crust only one side of the meat.” Hannibal began plating the food, arranging the steaks with an elegant drizzle of white pan sauce before adding several of the browned new potatoes and brightly crisp green beans. “This allows the steak to sear to perfection. The remainder of the peppercorns may simply be added to the sauce, so that the dish as a whole maintains the spicy snap that makes it uniquely appealing.”

Will rested his chin in his palm, having forgotten his resolve to show proper posture in Hannibal’s presence. How could he ever really impress someone so amazing, so flawlessly organized and confident? Maybe he should stop trying. At the moment, he was wrapped up in his own distinct sort of pleasure, which was watching Hannibal in the kitchen and listening to him pontificating grandly about the food.

“You need only bring your wine and yourself into the dining room,” Hannibal smiled, balancing the two plates in his hands.

“Oh, I’m sorry -- I should have asked if there was anything I could do to help.”

“It’s been a long day, hasn’t it, Will?” Hannibal guessed.

“It’s always been a long day, but that’s no excuse for bad manners.”

“Consider me monumentally unoffended. And will you please allow me to keep you here, pampered and spoiled, until you forget all your troubles and smile…” Hannibal slid past him easily, looking back over his shoulder as Will’s face lit up in an irresistible grin. “Just like that.”

“Okay, okay, twist my arm,” Will laughed, finding Hannibal’s own wine glass and carrying it into the dining room.

“Perhaps later,” Hannibal promised with a wink that sent heat up Will’s neck. His amber eyes glinted in the candlelight as he looked over Will’s flustered expression and admired the fit of his sky blue dress shirt, left open at the collar. Will had chosen it, had even found a few spare minutes to *iron* it, hoping it would bring out the color of his eyes in a way Hannibal might like.

These days, Will found himself caring so much more than usual about how he looked. It was stupid, really, since Hannibal’s attraction for him had first manifested when Will’s number one look was rumpled, disgruntled plaid and tweed, but somehow the glow of all this admiration had Will feeling differently about his appearance. Hannibal found him handsome, remarkably so, and it made Will enjoy playing up his looks. He felt a little electric thrill whenever Hannibal seemed transfixed by him, and could even appreciate the slight boost in his own confidence. It was...what? Even in his most reflective moments, he couldn’t quite find the word.

“Forgive me for staring, mylimasis; it is only that you look particularly lovely this evening.” Hannibal lifted his glass and proposed a toast: “To us?”

“To us,” Will echoed and they tapped their glasses together with a musical clink.

They had only been together for a month, so he shouldn't give Hannibal the anniversary card he'd picked up in a weird fit of whimsy that afternoon. As of today, it had already been four weeks since Hannibal asked him out and turned his life upside down in the best way ever. It had Will feeling crazily sentimental. He wasn't used to it, wanting to press memories into a mental scrapbook and run his fingers fondly over every special moment of intimacy between them, but increasingly Will wanted to *get* used to it. He wanted to keep what they had and take it further, then further, and that was a huge mistake. People came into Will's life only on a temporary basis, right?

But by dessert time, the second glass of wine had rendered him a bit braver. "I got you something, maybe it's dumb," he ventured. "Do you mind if I go into the library and get it?"

"You may be excused," Hannibal allowed, curiosity glimmering in his eyes.

Will went into the other room and dug a hand into his leather messenger bag's front pocket before he could chicken out, then returned bearing a simple envelope whose contents were anything but simple.

"It's just a card," Will said with bright red cheeks, passing the tan envelope to Hannibal, immediately wanting to hide under a rock. "Maybe it's silly, but I remembered that it's our one month anniversary."

Hannibal took the time to read every word of the card, typical Hallmark words of tenderness and appreciation such as Will once would have found trite. Yet he'd gravitated towards this one out of the options on display in the Anniversary section of the cards in the drug store because it actually matched his feelings with shocking eloquence.

He bit his lip and paced back and forth, running a hand through his hair. "I know, it's cheesy. I just saw it, and well I wanted to tell you, or show you..I mean, that...never mind."

"It is not 'cheesy,' Hannibal insisted, lowering the card from his eyes as tears welled in them. "It's beautiful. Thank you, Will."

"I've never, uh, never bought a card like that for someone. I thought about getting you flowers or something, but then I didn't know which you would like and I didn't want to be too over-the-top about it...which is weird because you sent me that gift basket and that was fine." Will stood still now, but his fingers were twisting together as he searched for a way to cogently extricate himself from this crisis of babbling.

Hannibal appeared before him deftly. "Yes?"

"Yes, it was fine, it was more than fine, I--" Will pressed a hot, almost desperate kiss to Hannibal's mouth, then pulled back slightly to say, "I care about you a lot."

"I care about you, too, dear one." Hannibal stroked through curls rendered messy by Will's nervous tugging. "More than I knew I could care for anyone at all."

Will let out a sigh of relief. "That makes me feel a lot less like a blathering idiot right about now."

Hannibal chuckled softly, his breath tickling Will's face. "I thought our anniversary was tomorrow, so the items I had planned to give you have already been ordered for that date."

"Tomorrow is the anniversary of our first date," Will mused, "I guess I was counting it from when you asked me out."

"It makes no difference to me." Hannibal laid a trail of feathery kisses over his brow. "I merely wished you to know I hadn't forgotten the occasion."

"Wait, what do you mean, 'items,' as in plural? I didn't even get you-- I mean, it took all my nerve just to give you the damn card."

"Will," Hannibal replied with a lightly reproving smile. "Remember your manners. You're to let me spoil you, yes?"

Will laughed wryly, blushing for what seemed like the millionth time of the evening. "Okay, yes."

***

When Will got home from work the next day, he went about his usual routine, kind of curious about what gifts Hannibal had ordered to be delivered, but otherwise unperturbed. Right now, all he wanted was a nice, long walk in the woods with his dogs, followed by a dinner of who-cares-what and a quiet evening of reading and whiskey by the space heater. A phone call with Hannibal before bed, since Hannibal had to go out of town for a medical conference today.

Throughout the walk, amidst the companionship of his pack of former strays and the fresh air to clear his mind of murder and meyham, Will knew his thoughts would keep circling back to the same point in time, the look on Hannibal's face as he read Will's card. He was looking forward to dwelling on the memory like a complete dweeb.

He was returning with the dogs over the hill towards his little house when he saw the delivery truck in the drive-way, emblazoned with the name of an insanely fancy florist in Baltimore, the same one from whom Hannibal had procured the gift basket. Will had barely made a dent in all the treats from the previous gift, and couldn't imagine what sort of nonsense Hannibal had gotten up to this time, but he practically bolted over the hill, the dogs hot on his heels and barking cheerfully.

"Will Graham?" the delivery guy asked, brandishing a clipboard. "Sign here please, and if you could open the front door, it will make it easier to get everything inside."

"Every…." Will scribbled his name on the dotted line in perplexity. "Thing?"

By the time the truck drove away, Will's kitchen counter was covered in gifts: a bottle of champagne with a label in French, a bouquet of 24 passion-red roses complete with a gorgeous new vase, the largest box of decadent chocolate truffles he'd ever seen, and

well...goddammit, an even *bigger* teddy bear with sweet brown eyes and fluffy fur. This was ludicrous...what had possessed Hannibal…? Under absolutely no circumstances was Will going to cuddle that stuffed animal.

A few hours later, Will was lying in bed with the box of chocolates on one side of him and the teddy bear on the other. He put a dethorned rose between his teeth to greet Hannibal when their video call connected.

“I see everything has arrived as planned,” Hannibal remarked, pleased. He chortled as Will waggled his eyebrows. “I trust you’re enjoying the gifts?”

“I’d be enjoying it more if you were here. I guess I can cuddle up with this guy and think about cuddling up with you tomorrow.” Will held up the bear and Hannibal smiled.

“I decided that in honor of our first monthly anniversary, I should like to honor every traditional gift item generally bestowed between lovers.”

“I guess you forgot the lingerie,” Will laughed. “Thanks, Hannibal, really. I love it all, even if I’m still getting used to the idea of you spoiling me.”

“Sweet dreams, mylimasis. Come to me tomorrow evening when I’m home again. I have one more gift for you, although in truth it is a gift for me, as well.”

Will looked at Hannibal’s gorgeous face, feeling another inner double take at the mere thought that this man wanted him. Sometimes he felt tempted to scream, run naked through the woods, give thanks to some ancient gods of luck or fate, anything to give vent to the overpowering new sensations of hope and joy. Emotion was pouring out of his heart, out through his pores, and how could this really be happening to him? There was no way he could explain all of this to Hannibal; he would show him, though. He would show him tomorrow.

But what was all this about yet *another* present?

“Oh, you’re incorrigible,” he accused.

Hannibal smiled gently. “I hope so.”

“Sleep well,” Will murmured, turning onto his side and tucking the bear into his stomach, nestling his face into the pillow with a long yawn. “See you tomorrow.”

***

“So where’s my last present?” Will asked after dinner the following evening.

He helped Hannibal clear the dishes as the other man stalled answering for a few awkward moments.

“I may have changed my mind about giving it to you.” Hannibal’s eyes stayed firmly on his work as he started rinsing plates and silverware, so Will came up behind him and gently pinched his stomach.

“What? You can’t do that, I’ll die of curiosity.”

“You thrive on curiosity, Will. If anything, a bit of mystery might maintain the excitement between us.”

“Please, that sounds weak, even as you say it,” Will guffawed. Hannibal shot him a slightly irritated look as they loaded the dishwasher.

“The subject is closed,” he insisted, starting to clean the sink with unnecessary vigor.

“Take off those rubber gloves, Hannibal.” Will snuggled his face into Hannibal’s neck and bit him lightly. “Tell me where my present is.”

“Stop it, you insolent boy, I’ve said no--”

“I say yes,” Will laughed, tickling Hannibal’s stomach, loving the soft, warm feeling of it under Hannibal’s perfectly pressed white shirt. “Give it, now. Please?”

Hannibal melted into laughter and pushed Will’s fingers away. “I am horribly ticklish just there, Will.”

“Filed away for future reference.” Will stepped back and crossed his arms, fairly sure he’d won the argument. “So?”

“And so, I...I’m a bit worried I was over-hasty in indulging my own whims regarding this gift. And if I give it to you, you may be offended.”

“Offended?” Will’s brows shot up. “Oh, now I *have* to know what it is.”

“Very well, but you have been warned.”

In the bedroom, Hannibal opened his bottom dresser drawer and removed a flat white box wrapped in a black velvet bow. So far, it seemed innocuous enough. Will sat down on the bed and started to untie the bow, but Hannibal rested a hand above his.

“In giving you this, I’m letting you know about a specific desire I would like to play out with you. If it gives you pleasure, too, then you may wear this, but if it does not, we need never speak of it again. I won’t have you thinking I want you to do it merely to please me.”

“Okay,” Will nodded, his throat going dry at Hannibal’s serious expression. What the hell could it be?

Inside the box, nestled within a layer of black tissue paper, was a three-piece set of dusty pink-colored lingerie. Dubiously, Will lifted out the bra, which was entirely see-through, made of impossibly soft floral-patterned lace. It had criss-cross ribbons between the cups. The corset was a separate piece, with stiff boning and more ribbons, laced through golden eyelets at the center. Finally, the panties....Jesus, it was bad before the panties, but now he was panicking. They were low-cut in the front, just a bunch of ribbons and tiny strips of fabric continuing the design scheme of criss-cross satin above gauzy lace. In back, they were cut...it was a…

"This is a thong," Will managed, his face feeling hot, his heart racing, fight or flight raging through his decision-making process at a rate faster than he could keep up with.

"Yes."

"It doesn't look like it was made for a woman, going by the proportions." Will held the bra and corset again, turning them each around in his hands and looking at them with awe and dread.

"It wasn't. It's for you. There are stockings as well," Hannibal ventured carefully.

"Show me." Will put the lingerie back in the box and set it aside, feeling instantly safer.

Hannibal removed a smaller box from the dresser. The thigh-high stockings were also incredibly soft, tan with a layer of pink just at the top. There were those little strappy things that attached to the corset. Sure, Will guessed that on the right person, garters and stockings looked hot and naughty, but he had no idea how they actually worked, much less a clue why anyone would want to see *him* decked out in such complicated, feminine attire. Maybe there was a little voice deep in his mind whispering that the idea held some appeal, and it intimidated him.

"Why would you want me to wear this?" Will asked, his voice weak. He stared at the floor.

"I think you would look outrageously sexy in it." Hannibal sat beside him and took his hand, rubbing soothingly over his knuckles.

"Me? But I'm…" Will waved a hand over his flannel shirt and jeans. "Me."

"Exactly." Hannibal kissed his knuckles, one by one, the softly wet sensation going to Will's head like taking a shot of alcohol.

"You want me to look like a woman?"

"In terms of sexual attraction, gender is a nonentity to me. I want you. Whether you wear this or not. It was merely an idea, a tentative suggestion easily silenced. And, as you observed, it is a traditional anniversary gift."

"I don't think I want to wear it," Will blurted. "I'm not delicate enough or…" He skipped over the words 'special enough' in his mind, not wanting to dwell on it. "It's not my thing."

“Very well,” Hannibal smiled patiently, putting the gifts away again in the drawer. “I won’t mention it again.”

***

“I’ve been thinking about it,” Will admitted over breakfast the next morning.

“Oh? What have you been thinking about?” Hannibal neatly arranged a forkful of eggs and speared a cherry tomato, displaying a perfect facade of innocence.

“*Hann*ibal,” he groaned, nudging Hannibal’s foot under the table.

Hannibal shouldn’t sit there looking like that with his bathrobe and pj’s, soft morning hair and sleepy expression which couldn’t quite mask his smugness, and think it wasn’t going to drive Will crazy. “Don’t. You know what I mean.”

“The gift,” Hannibal posited casually, though his toes came up to playfully stroke Will’s ankle. “I hope you haven’t been troubling yourself about it.”

“Liar. I was up all night troubling myself about it and you love it. You love to provoke me, shove me out of my comfort zone and see what happens.”

“In fairness, this was more of a tap.”

“I never thought about wearing…” he whispered the word, “lingerie.”

“No one else is here, Will,” Hannibal smiled adoringly at his self-conscious manner. “This stays between us.”

“Alright,” Will let out a shaky breath. “It’s more the thought of your reaction that turns me on. I think I would look absolutely ridiculous, but if *you* liked it, that would make me...very aroused. So I’m considering it.”

Hannibal grinned, flashing his fangs. “I’m thoroughly delighted. Have you concocted a scenario for it?”

“A simple one. We have an ordinary evening here, dinner and drinks, reading by the fire in the library, then we go up to bed. But, the entire time, I’m wearing that...the um, *outfit* underneath my regular clothes. You know it and I know it.”

“Consider me extremely distracted at the thought.”

“Me, too. I want you to take my clothes off and find what I’m wearing underneath. Then I want to know what you’ll do about it.”

Hannibal gripped the edge of the table as his eyes bore hard into Will. “I want to throw the plates and glasses to the floor and have you right now, on top of the table, Will. I can barely stand to hear you voicing these insinuations without showing you my thoughts on the matter in great detail.”

Will couldn’t help a shiver, thinking how rare it was to see Hannibal unhinged like this, and how easy it was for Will to get him there. Hannibal wasn’t the only one in this relationship who thrived on provoking. He would like nothing more than to give into Hannibal’s impetuous seduction; his body ached at the thought, but somehow he managed to process logical thought amidst the passionate desire threatening to wipe away the ability.

If he made Hannibal wait...how much wilder would the sex be? How would the pent-up energy manifest? Will pressed his hands to his thighs under the table, the thought going right to his dick. *God*...

“You’re going to wait for Friday, though.” Will smiled, taking a bite of toast. “I have a feeling that will make it better. Keep thinking about it the whole time. Let’s see what happens.”

“Yes,” Hannibal murmured, leveling Will with a sensuous glare. “Let’s.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> The lingerie is similar to this set: https://www.agentprovocateur.com/us_en/essie-waspie-196#selection.color=5608
> Only Will's is pink and with skimpier panties because of course.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will appeared on Hannibal's doorstep on Friday night with a foil-covered brownie pan and a paper liquor store bag held precariously in his hands.

The corset was digging slightly into his sides in a way that wasn't painful, but somehow...pleasurably confining. Then there was the feeling of the lace against his chest, over his nipples, shifting slightly when he moved, a soft caress that reminded him of Hannibal's breath on his skin.

As for the panties, they fit perfectly, like everything else. Hannibal had obviously committed his measurements to memory, down to the last detail. The gauzy fabric stretched snugly over his cock and balls, the sensation erotic and suggestive beyond what he ever would have anticipated. It felt really odd to have his ass so exposed under his pants; he wasn't exactly a "go commando" kind of guy, but the thong made him feel somehow rebellious and sultry. He'd wanted to masturbate so many times over the last few days, thinking of Hannibal playing with him while he wore this attire, but then he knew it would be better for him, too, if he waited.

Under his simple grey button-down shirt and tan slacks, the lingerie was a novelty. Will kept wanting to scratch or move the bra and panties slightly up or down; they weren't itchy, just new and weird. He almost dropped the treats he'd brought onto the front step, probably would have if Hannibal hadn't opened the door.

"You shaved," Hannibal observed immediately when he opened the door, as if he couldn't help blurting it out.

Will grinned. "You noticed. Just don't expect me to keep it up; this is a special-occasion thing."

"A very special occasion. And you're right on time," Hannibal was ever so slightly flustered as he instinctively grabbed the bag with the wine in it before it smashed on the step. "Here, allow me."

"Well, it would be rude to be late." Will followed Hannibal to the kitchen, where his host placed the cabernet (why not? It had become one of their things, to which Will easily

surrendered) on the counter. “I considered it, to provoke you a little bit more, but then I decided that would be going too far.”

“Perhaps you recall the evening you did not turn up for your session, and I drove all the way to Quantico to determine if you were alright.” Hannibal approached Will slowly as their minds returned to the memory.

Snowy roads and the blackest sky, Will’s consciousness disappearing over a slick slope into delirium. Hannibal’s voice bringing him back, then the two of them looking through crime scene photos together at Will’s desk, standing much too close, greedy for each other’s oxygen and the seductive rumble of voices falling into time, along with their movements. Like so much of Will’s life of late, the evening had felt like a hauntingly beguiling dream, a promise of more dreams to come.

“I remember you waking me up from one of my episodes, and that you seemed offended at my absence. ‘Twenty four hour cancellation policy,’ I think that was your line.”

“I was hurt by your absence, and it unsettled me. I couldn’t wait to see you again; that was the reason for my cold and formal greeting. I didn’t understand, at the time, what you were making me feel.”

Hannibal helped Will off with his coat, which he always did, but it felt different with the secret of the lingerie held between them, the expectation of what the later part of the evening would hold. Will bit back a moan as the simple, lingering touches of Hannibal’s fingers over his arms and shoulders drove him slightly mad.

“What...what was I making you feel?”

“Everything,” Hannibal smiled, cupping Will’s face as something breakable faltered to hide behind his caramel eyes. “You make me feel so much that even the occasional pain of it brings me to a place of dangerous joy. I suppose that above all else, what you make me feel is need.”

“Hannibal,” Will said thickly, “We-- we don’t have to wait, if you want to go upstairs.” His heart was beating so hard at Hannibal’s words, the emotion thrumming in his deep, throaty voice. The heartbeat hurt, too, but there it was, the dangerous joy, taking him over.

“Tempting,” Hannibal allowed, running his fingers through Will’s hair, every ordinary gesture and touch making Will weak in the knees. “Very, very tempting, Will. But I think you were right. Let’s allow this to play out until we are pushed to the limit of our endurance. The result will be much sweeter.”

Will wasn’t sure there would be anything *sweet* about it, aside from the dainty rose hue of his undergarments, but he nodded. “I made brownies,” he announced, gesturing to the foil covered tray on the counter.

Hannibal lifted one corner of the foil and leaned down to scent the chocolatey dessert. “Ah. With brandy.”

“It’s the only dessert I know how to make well. My partner on the force back in New Orleans shared it with me; it came from his great-aunt who was apparently quite the gourmet.”

“I can tell from the merest glance at these that you make it extremely well.” Hannibal recovered the brownies, and Will knew he was right, that they would burst with moistly rich flavor, but he knew the dish was still simple by Hannibal’s standards.

Like the card, Hannibal treated Will’s gifts and gestures as if each one was precious. It seemed way too good to be true, the way he handled Will, finding just the right balance of control and indulgence. How could anyone be so good at reading him? With no ulterior motive except to please him?

“Is something troubling you?” Hannibal asked, melting butter in a skillet, then adding meat which he had already seasoned and floured. Like most of what Hannibal cooked, it was exotic and savory, the type of thing Will might not normally go for -- kidneys, it looked like, probably lamb’s. But his mouth was watering because when Hannibal made it, every bite of a meal was guaranteed to be luscious.

“Too good to be true,” Will admitted with a shrug. Determined to be helpful this time, he brought the glass measuring cup of stock, the small bowl of mushrooms, and the bottle of worcestershire sauce from the island to the counter beside the stove.

Hannibal looked at him inquiringly.

“Sometimes I think we are. Sometimes I think you’re too much for me, and I’m not enough for you. I know you don’t feel that way.”

“No, I don’t, but I understand the sentiment. Sometimes, when I look at you...” Hannibal belatedly remembered the task at hand and dragged his eyes from Will’s long enough to flip the meat over and shift it carefully in the hot pan. “I feel unmoored from my knowledge of myself. I thought I knew the boundaries of my own emotion, but you’re expanding them.”

“So, getting to know me is making you get to know yourself?”

“In ways I never knew I needed.” Hannibal shook his head with a small, husky chuckle, clearly determined not to lose control of his recipe despite the topic and Will’s distracting closeness.

As he added the remaining ingredients, his eyes fixed on the food in an almost bashful avoidance of Will’s incisive observation, it seemed to dawn on him that something was missing.

“Will, can you please procure the peppercorn grinder from the cabinet just behind you? Middle shelf.”

It was such an innocent request, so neither of them thought anything of it until Will reached up and his shirt rose to expose a small swath of pink corset around his waist. His shirt was buttoned loosely on top, so that when he lifted his arm, Hannibal caught sight of a bra strap,

and let go of the spatula, forgetting everything else but the way Will looked in that moment, rosy-cheeked and expectant, his body covered in pink lace and silk.

“Will,” he growled, sliding a finger under the bra strap as Will let out a breathy moan. “*Will.*”

They moved together, lips about to touch, but then the fire alarm went off, blaring through the house because the meat had started to burn, sending plumes of smoke into the air.

Hannibal cursed in another language -- his native tongue, if Will was not mistaken, and shut the stove off. He bolted to the smoke detector and waved his towel in front of it as Will adjusted his shirt again to cover his lingerie. His skin tingled where Hannibal had touched him.

“So,” he ventured when Hannibal came back in looking slightly embarrassed. One look at the stove told them this meal was a goner. “I guess we’re ordering pizza.”

***

One pizza from the closest place with five stars on Yelp later, they relaxed in the library with their wine, Hannibal sitting in his usual leather armchair by the fireplace and Will sitting on the cozy rug, his face resting against Hannibal’s leg.

For some weeks now, Hannibal had been engaged in rereading the complete works of Charles Dickens, and now he had a large and ponderous volume perched neatly in his lap…*Little Dorrit*, Will discerned from a glance at the weathered spine.

Will had chosen a book about Lithuanian history, continuing his quest to understand this mysterious man who had him so besotted. It was a fascinating chapter, and normally Will would have passed a contented evening with nothing more than the slow turnings of pages between them, Hannibal’s fingers lazily stroking his hair, and the crackle-fizzle-curl of the fire casting an orange glow over the highly domestic scene.

But he couldn’t seem to relax, and neither could Hannibal. Will hadn’t heard him turn a page in what was easily fifteen minutes. Feeling restless, but not wanting to disturb Hannibal, he slipped his shoes off and nudged them neatly aside, then returned to his book with a slight wriggle of his toes.

This, however, had revealed the soft, tan fabric of the stockings covering Will’s feet, and Hannibal’s breath stuttered to a sharp gasp.

“Please,” Hannibal begged as Will glanced up at him in surprise. Hannibal’s eyes traveled from Will’s feet back up to his face, his own features etched in powerful yearning. “Will, *please*.”

Hannibal probably never said “please” if he could help it, except in passing and unavoidable instances of proper etiquette. But never to beg, not until now.

Will stood up and offered his hand, and it felt as if molten lava was running through his veins. His skin tingled all over with the longing to be touched, already incredibly sensitive and so needy. “Okay, let’s go.”

***

“How does it make you feel, wearing your gifts?” Hannibal asked, standing behind Will in the bedroom.

There were two lamps on, but they produced a low, golden glow that was acceptably unintimidating. Will never could have done this without dim lighting; he was still almost afraid of what lay under his clothes, even as his cock hardened more by the moment. Yet there was no hiding from Hannibal’s insight, so he just confessed the truth. It was a safe place to fall, so why not fall?

“It makes me feel strange,” Will admitted. Hannibal rested a hand on his chest and nuzzled gently into his neck, kissing him slowly. “God…”

Hannibal bit him softly, then licked at his warm skin while Will shuddered. It felt as if only Hannibal’s hands were holding him upright.

“Oh, that feels...oh…” He covered Hannibal’s fingers with his own, his eyes closed and neck leaned to give Hannibal better access. “Wearing this makes me feel different and new. Yours.”

Hannibal said nothing to this, as if for once he had been struck silent. “I’ve been thinking about you, every second of the day,” he finally resumed, crossing in front to begin unbuttoning Will’s shirt. “Have you worn something special for me tonight, my darling?”

“Something extra special.” Will smiled as his shirt fell to the floor and Hannibal gazed at him in the bra and corset, longing making his eyes big and bright. He kissed Will’s lips deeply, cupping Will’s chest through the lace and wrapping his other large, capable hand tight around Will’s corseted side.

Will moaned into the kiss, which tasted of the wine: dark fruit, warm spice, vanilla. Hannibal’s tongue slid against his own, slick with the shameless heat between them. Will started undoing Hannibal’s shirt with trembling fingers. Hannibal was groping him, exploring his body with rapt lust as if he’d never touched Will before, and it was making Will dizzy, so that the simplest acts were damnably complicated.

“God, you’re distracting me,” he sighed, tugging in slight frustration at Hannibal’s shirt. He wanted Hannibal’s strong, bare body pressed hard against him, *now*, and his ongoing feverish state was melding with his powerful arousal to make him --

Hannibal brushed his thumb over Will's nipple through the lace and Will nearly choked on his next breath.

"It's alright, Will." Hannibal clasped his face and kissed him tenderly. "Let me. Tonight, just relax and allow me to take care of you. Don't worry about a thing. Give into me?"

"Yes," he nodded, "That's -- that's perfect."

Hannibal undressed himself and Will touched him reverently, his fingers tracing over sculpted biceps. He leaned down to kiss Hannibal's chest, letting the chest hair tickle his nose as he lavished his tongue over Hannibal's nipples and they both let out broken little sounds of pleasure.

"I love your body," Will sighed. He'd never said something so obvious, so open and potentially embarrassing, to anyone, but then he had never wanted someone like this.

This was the natural transition point wherein Hannibal usually would have put a hand in Will's hair and shoved him down to his knees. Will would have gone very happily, would absolutely love to have Hannibal's thick, uncut and throbbing cock plunging over his tongue right now, but Hannibal was still just staring.

"Please," he said again, "I need to see you." He undid Will's trousers and pushed them down, then Will stepped out of them with wobbly legs.

Legs he had shaved because it was a special occasion.

It was Hannibal who dropped to his knees in worshipful admiration, dispelling every one of Will's anxieties about looking ridiculous.

"You have no idea," Hannibal sighed, kissing the smooth curves of Will's upper thighs where they were bare between the stockings and panties. He stroked up and down Will's slender legs, feeling the gossamer-thin, silky fabric against them. "No idea how beautiful you are to me."

Will was pitching downward into an abyss of passion, and he knew he might pass all of eternity like that, in a free-fall because of this man and the way they were changing each other.

"Show me," he pleaded, his cock bulging under the lovely pink lace.

Hannibal groaned and wrapped a hand around his own erection to stave off the unbearable throbbing. Then he licked a broad stripe up Will's panties, enveloping his balls one at a time, lightly sucking them through the slickening fabric. He lapped at Will's cock, curving his tongue at the tip where the panties were wet and smelling of musk and salt from precum.

"Hannibal, I need you to fuck me right now," Will begged.

"Soon, mylimasis." Hannibal tugged the panties down to his thighs, freeing Will's cock as Will let out a sharp sigh of relief.

“If you suck me now, I’ll come so fast, and I’m not ready.” Will leaned down and tipped Hannibal’s face up so their eyes met. “I want to come when you’re inside me.”

“Yes, sweetheart, I understand.” Hannibal stood and hugged him close, then cupped his ass cheeks and tugged his earlobe with his teeth.

“Lie down on the bed,” he whispered, his breath wet and hot against Will’s ear.

The panties slid down Will’s body and he stepped out of them, then lay down obediently, his eyes large and pleading on Hannibal’s looming form.

“So pretty,” Hannibal sighed, lying between Will’s legs, slipping one hand under the bra, massaging over his pectorals. His other hand was tight on Will’s thigh, and his smile was that of a man thoroughly bewitched. “You’re an angel to let me have you like this.”

“You can have me. You can do anything you want with me.”

Hannibal looked down at him in awe and some lingering twinge of doubt on the matter.

“Really,” Will assured him. “Show me what you want to do, seeing me all dressed up like this. It’s like I’m a present for you.”

Hannibal kissed him with hot, hungry pressure, licking into his mouth and grinding his cock up and down, grazing Will’s erection. “You’re unwrapped only just enough for me to take what I want and give you what you need.”

In demonstration, he climbed down the bed a bit and urged Will’s legs up until Will hooked his arms through them to give Hannibal full access. Hannibal caressed Will’s ass and licked his hole with even more wild enthusiasm than usual. The older man moaned as his tongue flicked over and swirled around the pink, puckered entrance, lapping indulgently until finally he could push the tip of his tongue inside.

Will was normally very bashful when Hannibal did this, as he could never fully get used to the idea that anyone would want to, but then the pleasure was so overwhelming he forgot to care. This time, he urged Hannibal on, lifting and widening his legs, feeling blatant and deliciously sinful.

“That’s so good, baby, yes...” Will’s head tilted up as his mouth fell open in disbelief, small but potent waves of pleasure coursing through him with every movement of Hannibal’s face between his thighs, the wet, insistent prodding of his tongue.

He was nearly ready now, but Hannibal’s procedure with the lube was a matter of shaky efficiency. He kept looking at Will, who was lying there in his skimpy underthings and stockings, his cheeks flushed and lips swollen, his hole gleaming with saliva, cock rigid, fingers clutching at the sheets to avoid the intense temptation of touching himself. Then Hannibal fumbled with the cap, sighing another string of swears, this time maybe French? But he finally managed to open the bottle of lube and slick up his fingers.

“I like to hear you speaking French; it’s so sexy.” Will smiled down at him and stroked his hair soothingly.

“Tu me fais tourner la tête.” Hannibal bit Will’s knee as he stroked between his ass cheeks with big, skilled hands. “mon trésor…” he kept hard eye contact as he pushed a strong, thick finger inside. “je suis raide dingue de toi.”

“Oh, God, Hannibal -- please,” Will panted, and Hannibal added a second finger, gliding in and out with slow, firm insistence. Grabbing Hannibal’s other hand, he pressed it harder against his chest, fingers digging into Hannibal’s wrist. “All of you, now, please.”

Hannibal’s fingers slammed into him roughly as he roved his other hand under the lacy bra and pinched Will’s nipple. “As you wish, my beauty.”

Withdrawing his fingers, Hannibal put on a condom as Will watched, licking his lips.

Will rolled his hips up as Hannibal pinned his legs in place with his arms pushed against them. Will’s stockinged legs dangled around Hannibal’s shoulders and he let out a keening sound when Hannibal thrust inside him, filling him up with his fiercely engorged cock.

“Oh, *fuck*,” Will gasped, feeling the breath knocked out of him by Hannibal’s long, deep strokes. “Yes, yes…”

“You need it badly, don’t you?” Hannibal’s hair fell across his forehead in that gorgeous way it often did, and his eyes blazed, enraptured.

“So much...need you so bad.”

This compelled Hannibal to give it to him even harder, until he pulled out with a harsh grunt and ordered, “Turn onto your side.”

Somewhere in the haze of everything happening, Will realized that Hannibal had planned this encounter carefully, targeting his intentions for Will’s utmost satisfaction. That became even more abundantly clear when Hannibal returned to the bedside table drawer and procured a new object, holding it in the palm of his hand as he spooned behind Will.

“Is...that a vibrator?” Will asked, his legs still trembling nonstop.

“I’d like to stimulate your sensitive areas while I'm inside you.” Hannibal’s explanation was so polite, but his voice was coarse with desire.

He kissed Will’s shoulder and added more lube before sliding his cock teasingly between Will’s cheeks. “Alright?”

“Yes.” Will whispered, shivering all over. These days, he seemed to be hot and cold simultaneously all the time, and it could be exhausting. But Hannibal pressed inside him, bringing back the warming sense of fullness and completion, and the shaking changed back into quivers of bliss as Hannibal fucked him senseless.

Hannibal turned the bullet vibrator on and trailed it all over Will's chest, circling and then landing ruthlessly on his nipples through the bra. Will felt the pleasure inside him growing hotter, wilder and stronger, and he knew he was perilously close. He tried to fight back the building orgasm somehow, keep his mind on prolonging this -- he wanted to know where else Hannibal was going to put that --

"Mylimasis," Hannibal sighed, kissing Will's neck and shoulder sloppily, losing his precision with the vibrator as his thrusts grew rougher and harder. "How I want you." He passed the vibrator to Will and gripped his arm tightly. "How I always want you."

The bullet buzzed powerfully inside Will's hand. "Run it over your low belly," Hannibal suggested. "I want to make you come now."

"Yes, God, I can't hold out any longer." Will's hand was shaking almost as much as the device within it, but he managed to press it to the soft, tender skin of his stomach beneath the corset, creating additional flutters of pleasure as Hannibal pounded into him faster, even harder -- the scent of sex was heady between them, sweat slicking their flesh.

"Then don't," Hannibal entreated. Will slid the vibrator back up to his nipple and only had to move a hand over his own cock a few times before he burst, pleasure spreading like tendrils of warm, magical happiness through his body from head to toe. He swallowed back a sob, but Hannibal kissed him again.

"Just let go, Will. It's alright, I have you."

Will shuddered into hot, helpless tears as Hannibal fucked him through his orgasm, pushing his oversensitized body further until the ecstasy had him untethered from reality, drifting away on his favorite cloud. Only Hannibal could put him up there.

"Now you come for me," Will begged, his voice dreamy-drowsy. "I want it to feel it all, I want to hear you. Bite me as hard as it feels good to fuck me until you explode."

Hannibal growled and slammed into him repeatedly, and when he came, he sank his teeth into Will's shoulder, where he had already bitten and worried the skin enough to leave bruising bite marks. Now he bit so hard that the skin broke, and Will could tell that he wanted to bite harder, if he was going to give an honest answer to Will's request.

Will cried out in deliriously confused pain. When Hannibal released him, breathing harshly, there were bright droplets of blood in a circle on Will's shoulder where the skin would be achingly livid.

"You can lick it, I know you want to." Will lay there submissively, slowly coming back down to earth. He looked back at Hannibal and found him in a state of complete disarray, hair mussed and lips slicked in red, eyes darkly feral.

Hannibal leaned in and enveloped the fresh wound with his velvety-wet tongue, then kissed Will's neck with the utmost gratitude. Throughout this process, Will was fearless, caught up in enjoying Hannibal's obsessive pleasure, even giggling slightly at Hannibal's ravenous slurps on his bloody skin.

“I broke the skin,” said Hannibal rather obviously, still returning to logical thought, almost as sluggishly as Will.

“Well, I pretty much asked you to.” Will flipped over and lay on his belly, tracing lazy circles through Hannibal’s chest hair. His eyes were blue and innocent as he smiled up at his lover. “I knew you’d like it. Just like the other day, at the Academy…”

“Yes. We’ll need to tend to it carefully,” Hannibal suggested, sounding hasty all of a sudden, almost regretful. He got up to dispose of the condom and brought the first aid kit back with him from the bathroom.

“Hey,” said Will, “it’ll be fine for a minute. We can take a shower and clean it out, then bandage it. Don’t worry so much.”

“You let me take such tremendous liberties with you, Will. What if I lose control someday and go too far, hurt you too much?”

“Whoa, whoa, slow down. You won’t do that, I know you won’t. You know when to stop and how far you can take it. I trust you. Okay?”

“I’m acutely fascinated by the sight of your skin covered in the marks I leave to claim you.” Hannibal sat down on the bed and hooked his fingers through Will’s, his eyes traveling over Will’s scantily clad body, finding every bruised suck mark, every lingering indentation of teeth. “I wish everyone who crosses your path could know that you are *mine*, and you can never be theirs.”

Will rolled his eyes, cheeks reddening at the excessive compliment. “C’mon, every single person that sees me doesn’t instantly want me.”

“If they have an iota of sense or taste, they do.” Hannibal ran a finger down Will’s face. “It makes me terribly possessive to think of it.”

“Good,” Will grinned, kissing him merrily. “Possess me terribly, then.”

***

“Sorry to see it go?” Will asked as he unclasped the bra. “I think you actually ripped it in a few places.”

Hannibal smiled, unfastening the corset, then going back down to his knees, peeling the stockings off as if they were close, beloved friends of his.

“Mylimasis, I can never be sorry to see you completely naked.” Hannibal held Will’s hand and led him caringly into the shower, where they washed each other with languid contentment.

“I kind of liked wearing it, you know. I *definitely* liked you tampering with it. But I don’t think I would wanna dress like that all the time, maybe just...sometimes? When the mood strikes?”

“Whenever you like. I’ve already selected numerous other items which would look splendidly on you.” Hannibal massaged shampoo through Will’s curls, looking down at him coyly. “Although I cannot promise I won’t ruin them as well. Whenever you feel the mood strike again.”

“Incorrigible,” Will accused, bopping him on the nose with the loofah. “Thank you for tonight. You make everything so…oh, wow, that’s it.”

“What?” Hannibal asked, intuiting that Will had experienced a lightbulb moment.

Will put his wet hands on Hannibal’s slick biceps and laughed whole-heartedly. “*Fun*. I never used to have fun, but with you, I always do.”

***

They climbed into bed a short time later, wet hair and warm bodies making them especially clingy under Hannibal’s lavish blankets.

“Oh! I almost forgot -- the brownies!” Will proclaimed.

“I’ll go and get them.” Hannibal kissed Will’s forehead and made to get out of bed, but Will laughed and slipped out first.

“Stay right there and relax, you don’t have to do everything. I’ll be right back.”

Hannibal looked slightly perturbed upon Will’s return, as if he’d had a few minutes to consider the idea of “relaxing,” i.e. relaxing his iron-grip control over every scenario he encountered. Perhaps to understand that he’d already long since lost control when it came to Will. But that wasn’t a problem, right? Hannibal deserved to know what it was like to let go and be safe in that surrender; he’d taught Will how to do just that with such incomparable affection.

“I warmed them up in the microwave. I was kind of surprised you have one, by the way. I found it tucked in among the cabinets, as if you were trying to hide it.” Will climbed back into bed, placing a plate of brownies between them as the chocolate-and-liquor scent wafted into the air.

“I rarely use the microwave, and I generally find their appearance rather garish. It’s only there in case of any specific need for it,” Hannibal admitted.

He watched Will with great interest, taking in the sight of his own loose-fitting borrowed pajamas on the younger man’s slighter frame.

“Strawberries and cream,” Hannibal smiled reflectively, gazing at Will’s damp curls and still-smooth, pale face with pink-flushed cheeks. “That’s what you remind me of in such moments as these. Perhaps it inspired my choice of color in your apparel for this evening.”

“I would be so vain, if I believed half of the things you said about me.”

“I can’t decide what is better, allowing you to continue as you are, endearingly bashful, or moulding you into my very own, confident little vamp. All considered, I don’t think I should like to choose only one of those options. I’d rather let you surprise me, as it is your foremost talent.”

Will smiled pridefully as he popped a bite of brownie into his mouth and had it confirmed that once again, he had aced this recipe. He felt so much calmer and more balanced within himself after they had sex. Hannibal went on watching him, and he loved the attention, basked in the glow of it.

“Here, open up,” Will prompted, lifting a morsel of dessert to Hannibal’s lips.

“Do you never cease in tempting me, sweet one?” Hannibal smiled.

“Now, Hannibal, be a good boy. You’re to let me spoil you.” Will’s eyes sparkled fondly. “Yes?”

Hannibal gave in as easily as breathing. “Yes.”

***

Hannibal supposed he must be going slowly insane; perhaps Will’s own instability was contagious, or he had been on a path to mental ruination from no other cause than damnable love from the first moment their eyes met in Jack’s office.

The following evening, Will stayed at his own house with the dogs and Hannibal remained at home in his elegant, majestic house to pace, overanalyze and drive himself even crazier with frustration and dread.

He kept playing back the memories from the night before, Will’s innocent laughter, the kind way he handled Hannibal’s various eccentricities, not with mockery but with such infinite affection. He loved Hannibal even more for being an often uptight perfectionist, and it was unbearable. The relationship which had become perhaps the defining one of Hannibal’s life, in addition to that he had shared with Mischa -- it was all built on lies. Deception had never bothered him in the past, but he had the rather ghastly notion he had finally met his match, his equal, and that rendered the lies supremely discourteous on his part. This time, unfathomably, he was the one being rude.

Hannibal had entered into dating Will with every intention of manipulating him, enjoying the process of dismantling his uniquely brilliant mind, and in the process divesting himself of the

foolish infatuation he bore the man. All on the way to framing Will for the Chesapeake Ripper's crimes, of course, because Will was the only one clever enough to catch him. But now…

Will loved him, and Hannibal could not quite seem to stand the way it made him feel in turn. Undoubtedly, his own erotic fixation on Will had blossomed into full-on obsession, but it was so much more than that; it was deeper than physical.

He had pierced Will's flesh with his teeth and Will had let him, even encouraged him to taste his blood; he trusted Hannibal that much. Hannibal's worry about one day possibly losing control and hurting Will too much had not been feigned. His hunger for Will had, in its immensity, utterly defeated his original scheme of manipulation. It seemed to know no limit, and he could not fathom it leading anywhere in the end but pain.

Doom, from Hannibal's lies, and pain from Hannibal's very nature. Was that all he had to offer Will Graham?

As he had done countless times in a twenty-four hour period, in between failing to enjoy murder, cooking up a scrumptious meal of his prey that he couldn't seem to taste, composing some pathetically disappointing tunes at the harpsichord, and creating another pile of crumpled-up rejected drawings in one corner of his desk, Hannibal sat down with an air of defeat and picked up the anniversary card from Will which he had proudly displayed at the center of his desk.

The front of the card featured a sun-dappled meadow of flowers, as well as scrolling cursive words: *You can brighten my world with a smile and warm my days with a kiss.*

Inside, the card read, *I love that...and I love you. Happy Anniversary.*

Hannibal traced his fingers adoringly over the nervous signature that followed, *Love, Will*. Tears fogged his vision, stinging his eyes and nostrils as his heart sank to the floor.

Without allowing himself time to talk himself out of it, he put the card down and made a fast grab for his coat on his way out the front door.

He would go to Will now, make a full confession, throw himself in the path of some miraculous outpouring of Will's mercy. Was Will's love big enough to include that kind of forgiveness?

***

"Hey, babe," Will said in surprise as he opened his door to find Hannibal waiting there in a hastily chosen raincoat that wasn't nearly warm enough for the frigid weather. "What are you doing here? I thought you needed some 'alone time' or however you put it."

“I suggested that a hint of solitude might allow me to return my attention to certain tasks I needed to perform, but the reality of my solitude turned out to be most disappointing.”

“Why was that?” Will smiled wryly, leaning against the doorframe in his grey henley and pine-green plaid pajama pants as if he wasn’t far too attractive and far too endearing.

This was it, Hannibal’s chance to confess. *Tell him everything* he urged himself, but then it would be over between them, he would lose all that they still might share before the inevitable disaster of their parting. He would lose this night with Will, and never be able to get it back.

“I missed you,” he blurted instead, relieved and nearly angry with himself, a rare and combustible mixture of untenable feeling.

“I missed you too,” Will laughed, letting him off the hook, extending his arms out. “C’mon out of the cold already.”

Hannibal stepped into Will’s embrace and wrapped his arms around the other man tightly, burying his face in Will’s curls and trying not to cry.

“Is everything okay?” Will asked, drawing back to examine Hannibal’s conflicted features.

“Quite okay, now that I am here with you. Tell me, what have you been up to, during your ‘alone time’?” Hannibal worked hard to transform his inner tumult into warm composure.

“Oh, nothing much, I had a burger. We’re watching *Star Wars*.” He nodded over his shoulder to the worn, small couch by the space heater where his tiny tv was propped on a table. The dogs were lounging on their floor pillows, barely making much note of Hannibal. His visits were frequent enough now that they had gotten used to him, as if he was part of the family.

A few scattered barks and lifted heads provided Hannibal cordial greetings and a clear request for more sausage.

“Hello,” he said, approaching them carefully. “Please do not jump up on me.”

“They won’t,” Will chuckled, only to let out a “tssk-tssk” a moment later. “Buster,” he warned, and the little dog nestled back into his cushion, his plan to leap up on their houseguest dissolved just that easily.

“Won’t you join us? Chez Graham has a simple, yet affable agenda for the evening.” Will whisked off Hannibal’s coat and led him to the couch. “Want a whiskey?”

“Please,” Hannibal asked, trying to shove all other thoughts from his mind aside from being with Will in this moment and enjoying it, as he did all of their times together, as if it might be the last. It was far too precious to diminish with fears of the future or anything so discomforting, so intolerably inconvenient, as guilt.

“Sorry,” Will said when he came back, passing Hannibal a glass of scotch. “The DVD skips. I keep meaning to replace it.”

“Come here.” Hannibal set his drink on the side table and leaned against a pillow placed at the armrest. He stretched his long legs out and Will sat between them, his back pressed to Hannibal’s front, their feet automatically tangling.

Hannibal put his arm around Will’s middle as his lover unpaused the film. “What is happening in this scene?”

Will glanced back at Hannibal in shock. “You’ve never seen *Star Wars*?”

“I confess I’m rather remiss in most contemporary pop culture.”

“Hannibal, this movie came out in 1977.”

“I stand corrected,” he smiled. “Is that man falling in love with the young woman in the white dress?”

“Nah, they turn out to be brother and sister. Leia, that’s the princess, she falls for Han Solo, the scruffy pilot-for-hire.”

“Love can be so unpredictable.” Hannibal’s breath was warm and whiskey-spiked, and Will tightened his hold on Hannibal’s arm.

“What did you say to me last night, in French? You never translated it for me.”

“I called you my treasure,” Hannibal murmured, “I said, ‘you make my head spin. I’m completely crazy about you.’”

Will ducked his head with a helpless little self-conscious laugh. “I’ve been trying so hard not to feel as special as you treat me.”

“And have you succeeded?” Hannibal’s voice was a sweet, buzzy purr against Will’s neck.

“Not nearly as much as I would have expected,” Will admitted, rubbing his toes over the tops of Hannibal’s feet. “Thank you for that, too.”

And he fell back into watching the movie with comfortable familiarity.

“I think Han Solo should make more of an effort to help the rebel fleet,” Hannibal piped up after a while, brow furrowed in concern and disapproval. “Instead of focusing all of his energy on self-preservation.”

True to form and ego, the real-life parallel to his statement was initially as lost on Hannibal as it was on Will.

“Cut him some slack, he’ll come around. Sometimes you have to give out a few second chances in life, accept people who’ve messed up because they’re there for you when it counts.”

Will’s nonchalant yet reflective words struck a chord with Hannibal.

Would there be any second chance for them, when the dream between them shattered like a teacup on the floor?

Could he be there for Will when it counted?

Only fate and circumstance would tell.

Chapter End Notes

...and this is the Anniversary card: https://www.hallmark.com/cards/greeting-cards/you-brighten-my-world-anniversary-card-799AVY1878.html

(::sobs in Hannigram::)

Fic title taken from the Shakira song

Thanks for reading! <3<3<3

End Notes

What can I say, I can never have too much of shy Will in lingerie. More soon!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!